
FW: Letter to Council re off-leash dogs in park, human health risk

From David Smith <david@dpsmithlaw.com>
Date Fri 11/14/2025 2:37 PM
To Makayla Rodriguez <mrodriguez@rollingwoodtx.gov>
Cc Carlos Tirado [REDACTED]

 1 attachment (183 KB)
CITY COUNCIL_TIRADO_LETTER_07212021.pdf;

Makayla-

Attached please find a letter attached from Dr. Carlos Tirado. Although the letter is from 2021, it covers ongoing health and human safety concerns with off leash dog use on little league baseball and softball fields. Dr. Tirado is a medical doctor and has expertise in epidemiology and public health issues. He is a physician (M.D.) and specializes in psychiatry. In addition to his medical training, he also has a Master's in Public Health (M.P.H.) focusing on community health promotion with a minor discipline in epidemiology.

Although he has very recently moved out of Rollingwood, he agreed to allow me to forward his correspondence and expert opinion to share with the members of the Park Commission, RCDC, and City Council. Please also include his expert opinion letter in the packet for the joint RCDC and City Council meeting on November 19th.

I have copied Dr. Tirado on this email.

Thank you.

-dps

David P. Smith

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From: Carlos Tirado [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2021 10:52 PM
To: Amy Pattillo <apattillo@rollingwoodtx.gov>; Buck Shapiro <bshapiro@rollingwoodtx.gov>; Gavin Massingill <gmassingill@rollingwoodtx.gov>; Michael Dyson <mdyson@rollingwoodtx.gov>; Sara Hutson

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Cc: Amber Lewis <alewis@rollingwoodtx.gov>; Ashley Wayman <awayman@rollingwoodtx.gov>

Subject: Letter to Council re off-leash dogs in park, human health risk

Dear Council Members,

It's your neighbor Carlos Tirado ([REDACTED]). I was asked to weigh in on the issue related to off-leash dogs and dog waste on the North baseball field in our park.

Although the reports I heard of dog bites/attacks are very concerning, this letter focuses on the known health risks of exposure to dog waste which I believe poses an even greater health hazard.

I felt it was my duty as a concerned citizen to highlight the very real health risks posed by the status quo.

I know there are strong opinions about this and don't envy the Council as they weigh these matters and effectively lead us to a resolution that is informed by scientific evidence and in the interest of the health and safety of our entire community.

CFT

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Carlos F. Tirado, MD, MPH, FABAM

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"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."

- Samuel Beckett

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Carlos Tirado, MD, MPH

[REDACTED]
Rollingwood, TX 78746

07/21/2021

Dear Members of Rollingwood City Council,

My family and I have had the pleasure of living in our community since 2011. I am a proud owner of a beautiful and sweet 10-year-old labradoodle (Bear). I am writing you as a concerned citizen and to provide my perspective as a medical expert.

Brief description of my background:

I am a physician (M.D.) and specialize in psychiatry. In addition to my medical training, I also have a Master's in Public Health (M.P.H.) focusing on community health promotion with a minor discipline in epidemiology. I run a group medical practice and am responsible for over a dozen facilities in Texas and Southern Florida. I routinely develop and implement policies and procedures related to infectious disease control, contact precautions, and conduct facility compliance audits for Joint Commission accreditation. During COVID, I coordinated pandemic response and education for practitioners, medical staff and patients across all our facilities (and continue to do so).

I recently reviewed a series of messages related to the presence of off-leash dogs roaming in the far baseball field at Rollingwood Park. Over the years it has become an improvised dog park.

The numbers don't lie. In study after study, the presence of [hookworm \(live and eggs\)](#), [intestinal parasites](#), [toxocara](#), and [whipworms](#) is ubiquitous in dog parks. Although the US ranks below other parts of the world in global percentages, fecal contamination of dog parks is recognized as a human health risk in every urban center I reviewed.

Given the fact that the field is used for sports activities, the presence of any amount dog feces poses a legitimate health risk to those who are exposed, especially small children. The CDC has published an [excellent overview of dog to human diseases](#) that are communicable by exposure to dog feces. Although some of the risk can be mitigated by fastidious collection of fecal waste, it is practically impossible to ensure that the field is kept completely free of fecal contamination. The microenvironment created on the field after a hard rain in the summer creates a perfect environment for exponential bacterial and intestinal parasite growth and reproduction.

One example to provide a frame of reference of the problem posed by dog feces contamination in cities and waterways is highlighted in a report from the [Northern Virginia Planning Commission](#):

*"Eliminating or significantly reducing the quantity of pet droppings washed into storm drains and hence into surface waters can improve the quality of urban runoff. It has been estimated that for a small bay watershed (up to 20 square miles), **2 to 3 days of droppings from a population of 100 dogs contribute enough bacteria, nitrogen, and phosphorus to temporarily close a bay to swimming and shellfishing.**"*

And this in a [report from Rhode Island](#):

"The longer dog waste stays on the ground, the greater the contamination becomes, according to the EPA...Dog poop is 57 percent more toxic than human waste, and can harbor bacteria and parasites that

Carlos Tirado, MD, MPH

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cause illness in humans. It has been estimated that an ounce of dog waste can contain 650 million fecal coliform bacteria."

Dog waste is recognized by the EPA as the [second most common cause](#) of bacterial water contamination (second only to livestock). Ticks and fleas are also known vectors for human disease.

Although I appreciate the strong convictions expressed by those who believe that access to the baseball field is a vital privilege that should be afforded to their beloved pets, as a medical professional I cannot square this with the known risk of human disease posed by exposure to dog waste.

Sincerely yours,



Carlos F. Tirado, MD, MPH

References:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28947905/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32057390/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30142562/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24524656/>

[Dogs | Healthy Pets, Healthy People | CDC](#)

<http://www.myxyz.org/phmurphy...k%20BMP%20Pilot%20Project.pdf> (nps.gov)

<https://www.ecori.org/pollution-contamination/2014/11/20/dont-blame-animals-only-for-pollution-problems.html>

[Sourcewaters protection practice bulletin: EPA](#)